
Teaching Criminal Justice Online: Comparing the Options and Getting It Right

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Internet-based distance learning programs have matured to the point where complete programs are capable of being delivered online. The discipline of criminal justice has followed this growth trend at all levels: associate, bachelor's, and graduate. Recent legislation allowing more than 50 percent of institutional enrollments to be online, with continued federal aid, may have positive growth effects. Additionally, the unique characteristics of the criminal justice field have fueled the growth of the online criminal justice distance learning programs. The following article discusses the reasons for a need for increased availability of criminal justice online programs. The costs and benefits of online delivery for such programs are discussed as well as different institutional approaches. The article combines research findings from surveyed criminal justice faculty and an overview of related literature on the subject of online programs.

Across the nation, many colleges and universities are in some stage of implementing a form of distance learning system (Allen and Seaman 2006). Still, other institutions are either planning entry into this field, or vigorously defending their decision not to pursue distance learning. As has always been the case, change in established institutions is slow and usually faces resistance at various levels. Resistance to distance learning has mostly centered round the loss of personal interaction between the instructor and the student, as reflected in editorials appearing in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and other online sources (Carr 2000; DESIEN 2000; Hirons 2003; Levine and Sun 2003; Olsen 2000). The most negative opinions about online education have generally been from the small, private, four-year institutions (Allen and Seaman 2006). Sources of such opinions generally include the failure to address practical considerations, fear of being replaced, and a lack of institutional vision (McLean 2005).

Regardless of resistance and *ambivalence*, distance learning is growing rapidly as a result of several factors. Budget constraints, limited class sizes, job constraints, changing life styles, and student preferences reflect the fueled

growth (McLean 2005). From 1995 to 1998 the use of Internet-based courses increased by 62 percent, increasing to 1.6 million online students (Franks 2006). This increased to over 2.3 million in 2004; and the largest percentage increase of 800,000 students occurred between 2004 and 2005, resulting in nearly 3.2 million students taking at least one online course (Allen and Seaman 2006). Further findings were that 87 percent of four-year colleges offered distance-learning courses in 2004, with 96 percent of institutions with student populations in excess of 15,000 students offering some distance learning courses (Allen and Seaman 2006).

It is important for registrars and administrators to increase the number of students attending the institutions, not simply shift students from the classroom to the online computers. Students are looking for a quality education and, once they make the decision of distance learning over “brick and mortar, in-class” learning, they will begin to develop a new set of decision points for selecting online learning, and, subsequently, achieving their goals of a college degree. Research has revealed a marked increase of satisfaction with distance learning courses over face-to-face classes as well as over blended or hybrid courses (Allen and Seaman 2006).

From an overall enrollment standpoint, many recent economic downturns including lower state funding, reductions in gifts and grants, and reduced endowment revenues have resulted in tough decisions concerning capital construction, building and classroom additions (Brownstein 2001). Capital improvements are decreasing and colleges and universities are faced with other means of course delivery to increase both enrollments and revenue while maintaining quality and in education (Brownstein 2001). While many traditional colleges and universities will strive to increase their student capacities via traditional brick and mortar classrooms and dormitories, a number of institutions are enrolling non-traditional students who are typically older, married, and who work full-time. There has been a definite shift from what was once considered the traditional, 18-22 year-old, college student; students in this age category now make up fewer than 3 million of America’s 17 million students (Stokes 2006). In fact, 40 percent of today’s college students are “part-time” students; 40 percent attend two-year institutions; and, 40 percent are aged 25 or older (Stokes 2006). Potential student interests are typically on completion of a degree for purposes of employment or advancement in the shortest amount of time. To facilitate this, many non-traditional students are reverting to non-traditional means to attain their education and distance learning has been a viable alternative (Stokes 2006).

A number of authors have pointed to some rather obvious factors that students should utilize in making the decision to take online courses. These include accredited programs, whether regional, national, or online; proven online success; sound technical capabilities; 100 percent online university; online faculty; attractive financing; quality customer service; graduation scheduling; satisfied graduates; and, small classes (Hedding 2001; Mueller 2003).

To avoid simply “meeting the needs” of non-traditional students from a degree standpoint; but, instead to meet the “educational” needs in a manner comparable to in-class, face-to-face, standards must be established and met to avoid the marginalization of the discipline. The needs of non-traditional students are unique. Clearly, criminal justice must embrace the online criminal justice degree program at a deeper level. Not only are there a number of criminal justice students who are not working in the criminal justice field, but there are “non-traditional” adult learners juggling jobs, family, and other activities (Stokes 2006). Additionally, those students working in the criminal justice field must also juggle an occupation that often does not provide a regular schedule conducive to traditional, in-class, on-campus coursework.

A number of criminal justice departments are moving toward developing and offering online courses, whether as separate courses, minors, or entire programs. As Nelson (1998) argues, educators in criminal justice can and should be at the forefront of the distance learning movement. Currently, many of the 25 doctoral-granting programs in criminal justice, the 100+ master’s-level programs, the 600+ bachelor degree programs, and 1,000+ associate degree programs offer online course or program delivery (Clear 2001). However, not enough do so. Geographic “pockets” exist, where driving long distances would be required of students and instructors alike if qualified instructors could even be found. In high-commitment areas where both student and professional interest are strong, there is no reason why education cannot be available; and, online education allows for qualified, certified, and accredited courses in all locations, at all times. It is a matter of meeting the students’ needs and getting it right. Online learning is the wave of the future. More and more students require flexibility in program structure to accommodate their other responsibilities such as full-time jobs or family needs. Increasingly, they will “shop” for courses that best accommodate their needs.

This study addresses four major issues that must be addressed by colleges and universities as decisions are made to offer courses and entire programs of criminal justice online: a commitment to distance learning by the entire

institution, a conception of distance learning as both a viable and equal form of education, recognition of the important educational factors and qualities of teaching online, and the need to recognize the key steps to teaching online.

Literature Review

Far too many discussions of online education have involved controversies and sweeping generalizations. Examples include arguments that online courses are not for everyone, or that online courses are more or less successful than face-to-face courses. At the risk of oversimplification, most of the issues associated with effectiveness in online education may be distinguished as either technical or non-technical issues. Technical issues include cost factors, overhead, complexity, and platform constraints. Non-technical issues involve role expectations from student learning styles to teaching styles to adjunct teaching pools to administrative climates. Cost factors are of paramount importance for those “late in the game” who have yet to choose their variant of online education or a delivery platform. The continually increasing costs for “bells and whistles” are almost as steep as the learning curves—which sometimes may, in fact, lower costs. Overhead issues involve service reorientation and staffing concerns. Complexity produces resistance to change, especially from non-computer-literate faculty. The simple truth is that placing a degree online means coming to grips with the idea that students may never set foot on campus. This idea is anathema to gatekeepers and obstructionists who will stop at nothing to sabotage everything for which online education stands (O’Connor and Eskey 2006; O’Connor and Joplin 1999).

There are many issues associated with providing effective online education; and for the most part, the development issues have been extensively discussed (Mirabito 1996; Snell and Penn 2005). However, the “comfort” factor remains problematic. As Smith, Bradley, and Bencoter (1999) point out, some faculty and some students will forever feel awkward in an online course and never believe that there are certain efficiencies in the differences. When done “right,” an online course, it can be argued, becomes an instrument and not a tool of instruction (Fabianic 2002). In a recent Sloan study, Wengert (2006) found that 57 percent of academic leaders believe learning outcomes for online education are equal or superior to those of face-to-face instruction. Undoubtedly, instruction becomes more instrumental when an instructor imparts “style” to a course. Attempts to rubricize style, “voice,” and a number of other intangibles evade most normal attempts at evaluation or assessment

(O'Connor and Eskey 2006). The degree of interaction will always remain crucial to assessments of quality (Nelson 1998), but there are other crucial components, most borne out of hard experience, with only a few identified in the literature.

Bernat and Hall (2000) attempt to outline some crucial features besides the fallback criterion of interaction. For example, the quality of timing is important. A good online course will have content such as Internet articles and sites to visit with the student's "load time" calculated and balanced so as to emphasize what needs to be emphasized. In the authors' experiences, far too many external links are provided less mindfully by instructors of online courses. Likewise, long lecture notes need to be accompanied by short summaries, abstracts, or synopses. Faculty cannot be "absent" from discussions, no matter how trivial, in an online course. Each student must be treated as a "class unto him or herself" and room must be made for the unusual and individualized. In the infancy of online instruction, considerable emphasis was given to demonstrating "equivalence" between online and traditional face-to-face instruction, and many institutions took this as "standardization" which became a benchmark if not an accreditation issue. Over the last decade, online courses have "come of age" in delivery and credibility. This may be attributable to such improvements as video streaming, chat rooms, and all the other kinds of technological advances; traditional faculty becoming more comfortable; and the accessibility and availability of faculty from anywhere on the Internet (Wengert 2006).

With regards to accreditation, groups such as AERA (American Educational Research Association, www.AERA.net) and the Sloan Consortium (www.sloan-c.org) have long advocated best practices in online education and instructional design principles like usability, clarity, readability, and engaging design to name a few. Groups like MarylandOnline (www.qualitymatters.org) have developed Quality Matters (QM) standards useful for assessing online courses with the "right" critical elements such as sufficient introductions, transparent grading policies, appropriate citations, "self-check" or practice assignments, and secure testing. Many educators will be familiar with such rubrics from the six main Regional Accrediting (RA) bodies and/or the associated Learning Commissions. Such standards represent important products for outcomes and assessments, and the latter should inform learning but not be the sole driving force (Littlefield 2006).

We should note that there is no total consensus on what constitutes a criminal justice course, let alone a coherent online criminal justice program, at

any level. There are a number of online criminal justice programs in various stages of development. Developing programs need to agree on what a common end result should be. There are still questions on what goals and outcomes must be present in courses, certificate programs, and degree programs. Further, debate continues over the delivery format of courses, whether in-class, hybrid, or completely online, or completely in-class, and whether existing courses should be augmented or totally new courses created. A number of institutions actively and continuously perform evaluations and comparisons of their courses by delivery mode. Of some note, in a recent study of 731 companies, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies, 52 percent of employers surveyed said they would be likely or very likely to purchase, endorse, or support a traditional classroom program at a main college campus, while 64 percent responded the same way regarding an “Internet-only” format that they preferred online training of their employers (Porter 2006). This is a reversal from a decade earlier.

Table 1. Sample of University Programs with Online Criminal Justice Programs

School	Students Enrolled
University of Phoenix (BS-CJA; MS-AJ)	115,794
Park University (BA/BS-CJ)	40,000
St. Leo University (BS-CJ)	40,000
University of Maryland—University College (BS-CJ)	37,329
Central Texas College (AAS-CJ)	22,090
San Antonio College (AAS-CJ)	19,000
SUNY—Empire State College (BS-CJ)	18,700
University of Florida (online certificate-CJ)	14,276
Walden University (MPA-CJ)	13,553
Washington State University(BA-CJ)	13,292
East Carolina University (MS-CJ)	12,578
Community College of Southern Nevada (AA-CJ)	10,583
Kaplan University (AA/BS-CJ)	10,029
Rochester Institute of Technology (BS-CJ)	8,630
Anne Arundel Community College (AS-CJ)	7,896

Source: O'Connor and Eskey (2006)

Some examples of the institutions with the largest number of online enrollments, including completely online criminal justice programs at various degree levels, are depicted in Table 1. Though not evident in Table 1, major research universities have large faculties and academic capabilities, and these institutions have generally not moved toward totally online programs. Those colleges and universities included in Table 1 were more inclined to have nearly 50 percent of their enrollments online.

There was very important and crucial legislation passed under the umbrella of HR 609, the College Access and Affordability Act. The bill, passed in July 2006, took into account various concerns of and observations from the broader community, including transfer of credit, an academic bill of rights, an advisory board for Title VI programs, year-round Pell grants, increased Pell maximum, loan limits, experimental sites, FAFSA simplification, and dilution of integrity provisions. The committee-approved bill significantly relaxes the “50-percent rule” for telecommunications courses. This allows institutions to remain eligible for federal funding and the distribution thereof while enrolling more than 50 percent of their students in online, distance learning courses. This is significant, especially for a number of colleges and universities that have recruited diligently and attempted to avoid registering more than 50 percent of their students in online courses (Carnevale 2006).

Growth Trends, Faculty Shortages, and Proprietary Schools

The overall growth of criminal justice online programs is and must be related to the subsequent growth of distance learning in the United States and elsewhere. The physical location of certified, qualified, educated experts geographically cannot match the geographic student demands at all levels, for example in a face-to-face format. In online courses, students and instructors can and will come from all over the world. As with distance learning overall, this is a true growth field. Clearly, for the future, the online enrollment projections have been realized, and there is no evidence that enrollments have reached a plateau. Online enrollments continue to grow at rates faster than rates for the overall student body and schools expect the rate of growth to further increase. One important growth factor can be attributed to a very large commitment by the military student population, especially in terms of so-called “swirling” where military students, as well as civilian students, forced by moves or other reasons—academic or otherwise—matriculate from one university to another to pick up where they left off (Smith-Bailey 2003). In

fact in 1992, 22.6 percent of high school graduates attended three or more institutions before earning a bachelor's degree and another 36.6 percent attended two institutions. In contrast, a 2003 study found that 58 percent of bachelor's degree recipients attended two or more colleges and 73 percent of all undergraduates are non-traditional students (Smith-Bailey 2003). In an earlier study, institutions that had the fastest growth had large enrollments attributable to both distance learning and large military student populations (Eskey 2005).

The professions of criminal justice attract a large number of non-traditional students most suited for online learning—for instance, those who are older, working full-time, married, in the military, or who require non-traditional hours for classes. As of 2004, nearly 2,000 U.S. institutions offered some form of distance learning program, which amounted to nearly 47 percent of U.S. colleges. This resulted in approximately 54,000 college-level courses available online in 2004 (Harris 2001). There are hundreds of degree programs and thousands of courses offered by universities, colleges, and training companies from all over the world. Both collegiate higher education institutions, as well as other entities, provide instruction to degree- or credential-seeking students through learning activities that are typically organized in courses for some form of academic credit.

A majority of institutions offering distance learning are traditional colleges and universities with on-campus students that also offer either some courses or entire programs of study at a distance (Allen and Seaman 2006). Technology-assisted instruction is both a pedagogical enhancement to the regular curriculum and a way to facilitate access to students who either cannot or choose not to enroll in traditional classes. How has this affected the study of criminal justice? Are criminal justice university and college faculty involved with developing courses and teaching distance learning/online courses? Although not so much an issue for traditional students, non-traditional students working in the field of criminal justice have migrated by the thousands to online degree programs, and the recent interest in various new courses such as forensics, cyber-crime, homeland security, and emergency management will fuel this growth migration.

A number of online students are matriculated in the same manner as in-class, face-to-face students. Additionally, they are often taught by the same faculty and are able to attend classes on the same campus (Phipps, Wellman, and Merisotis 1998). Additionally, identical courses can be offered at extended/off campus sites as well as on campus. A number of full-time faculty members

from various colleges and universities, full-time practitioners in the field, and Ph.D. students are utilized by colleges and universities to teach in an online, adjunct function. There is now a variance in geographic locations of these faculty members, and further, questions may be raised about the ethics and propriety of working for more than one school. In criminal justice, this issue is likely to be raised when the number of part-time, online adjunct opportunities at proprietary schools are considered (Phipps, Wellman, and Merisotis 1998).

One of the fastest-growing movements in the country right now is the rapid expansion of “for-profit” (proprietary) schools run by individuals or corporations. They were once the subject of jokes because they advertised on matchbooks. A famous example is the New York Art Instruction School's “Tippy the Turtle” draw-me scholarship contests which appeared in comic books from 1950-1990. Today, they are the darlings of Wall Street and produce \$3 million a year for partners and shareholders with an annual growth rate of 266 percent according to studies by the Education Commission of the States (Borrego 2001). The typical promise they make is to get you online, educated, and out of the classroom and into a high-paying, growth area faster than you can skim a set of Cliff Notes. In other words, one’s education will be “practical” without much of liberal arts getting in the way. In terms of instructor qualifications, instructors without “real world” experience need not apply, as opposed to traditional, liberal arts-oriented schools where the desired instructor is one who is academically trained and familiar with the research literature that underpins the fields of criminal justice, law enforcement, corrections, and justice management (Britton and Lindsay 2005). Many money- or degree-hungry students buy into proprietary school talk about “hot fields” such as criminal justice, homeland security, computer forensics, investigative forensics, and so forth without realizing that today’s “hot” fields may become tomorrow’s “dead” fields. Nevertheless, older students, minority students, busy students, and those who used to go to community college—and who make up the majority of community colleges—are now jumping at the chance of a “hot job” and will gladly pay a little extra for the convenience of an accelerated or intensive learning experience that takes little more than two years.

Proprietary schools physically account for about 23 percent of all colleges and universities nationwide, and in terms of enrollment, they’re growing at about three percent or more per year (NHERC 2004). Proprietary schools have played the accreditation game well. In most cases, they have accomplished this through cherry-picking the outsourcing and in-sourcing of student services. Their higher tuition and corporate-style and the continual

support services mean that they can afford to not only meet, but in some cases exceed certain accreditation criteria. They could conceivably dictate a role in the future of distance education. The proprietary schools in Table 2 were included in our study.

Table 2. Short List of Proprietary Schools

American Intercontinental University Online
Career Education Corp (American Intercontinental) – CJ/LE
Chubb – CJ
Corinthian (Florida Metropolitan) – CJ/LE
Westwood College – BS-CJ
Kaplan University – BS-CJ
Keiser – BS-CJ
Tiffin University – BA-CJ
Colorado Technical University – BS-CJ
Capella University – MA-CJ
Stonecliff College – AS-CJ
ECPI – AS-CJ
Anthem College – AS/BS-CJ
Everest College – AS/BS-CJ
Ellis College – BS-CJ
South University – AS-CJ

Four Major Issues Faced by Institutions Transitioning to Distance Learning

Complete Institutional Commitment to Distance Learning

The Internet allows criminal justice students, practitioners, and college professors to provide courses online, worldwide, on a continual basis. In a number of institutions, resistance is still met from a number of administrators, deans, chairs, and faculty members to the influx of distance learning. As such, it is important to establish programs around consistent standards and formats that are regionally and nationally recognized, accredited, and transferable. Such a standard might follow the guidelines recently adopted by the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Certification Standards for College/University (see http://www.acjs.org/pubs/167_667_12021.cfm). A major concern from academia is the need for an assurance that criminal justice

programs are taught by qualified and certified instructors.

When an institution makes a decision to implement a distance learning program, it is absolutely essential that administration, staff, and faculty commit to teaching online. There must be quality standards for online instruction, institutional commitment and buy-in, and effective communication modalities. These must cross several boundaries within the department, across the university, between and among schools, and with the community at the local, state, regional, and national levels. Above all, there must be true interaction. As technology improves and modernizes, so must quality standards evolve.

Administrators, deans, and chairs must avoid the “we-they” distinction between full-time, in-class faculty and full-time/adjunct online faculty. Wherever possible, faculty should be involved in both in-class and face-to-face classes as well as hybrid classes to ensure that courses retain the same syllabi, course objective, course learning outcomes, course learning assessments, and course delivery, no matter what the delivery format or course length.

Viewing Distance Learning As a Viable and Equal Form of Education

From May to July 2005, I conducted an online questionnaire with criminal justice faculty from nearly 100 university and college criminal justice faculty members nationwide. Respondents were somewhat divided on whether distance learning students were learning as much as in-class students. While 46 percent agreed that students were learning as much as in-class students, 39 percent did not; and, nearly 15 percent were undecided. The responses indicate that there is a split over the effectiveness of online versus in-class teaching (Eskey 2005).

Of the respondents overall, 41 percent felt that distance learning teaching courses are as effective as in-class courses compared with 37 percent of respondents in disagreement. Twenty-one percent were undecided. Such responses from criminal justice instructors from traditional colleges and universities suggest that the jury is still out on the comparison and subsequent usage of distance learning courses. Similarly, a survey of 731 companies, non-profits, and government agencies found that 20 percent more of employers favored Internet training over in-class training (Porter 2006). A compendium of over 40 studies on the effects of technology-supported distance education suggests that there is no statistically significant difference between the learning outcomes of distance or traditional students, and these respondents seemed to confirm this (Merisotas and Phipps 1999). Allen and Seaman (2006) found

that over 70 percent of administrators responded that online learning reaches students not served by face-to-face classes. In the same study, 63 percent of academic directors felt that the learned outcomes in online classes were on-par or better than those of face-to-face classes.

In a 2005 survey, I found agreement from the criminal justice faculty respondents regarding the importance of distance learning courses as being necessary for practicing criminal justice professionals (police officers, correctional officers, etc.). A slight quandary, then, is that there is not total satisfaction with distance learning; but, there is a very strong recognition of the need for distance learning for practicing criminal justice professionals whose work involves a varied schedule.

The most pressing issues for survey respondents were the composition and delivery of their programs. Many institutions are struggling with the correct mixture of courses and disciplines to answer the demands of developing and teaching courses in an online format. At issue is finding and retaining faculty to teach these courses. Distance learning allows for a tremendous breadth of non-local instructors. It is, however, imperative that standards are established to ensure the quality of meaningful, accredited courses, certificate programs, and degree programs. Analysis is needed which will focus on the instructional and course needs and current means of assuring that instructors, courses, and course standards meet these needs.

Recognizing Important Factors and Qualities of Online Education

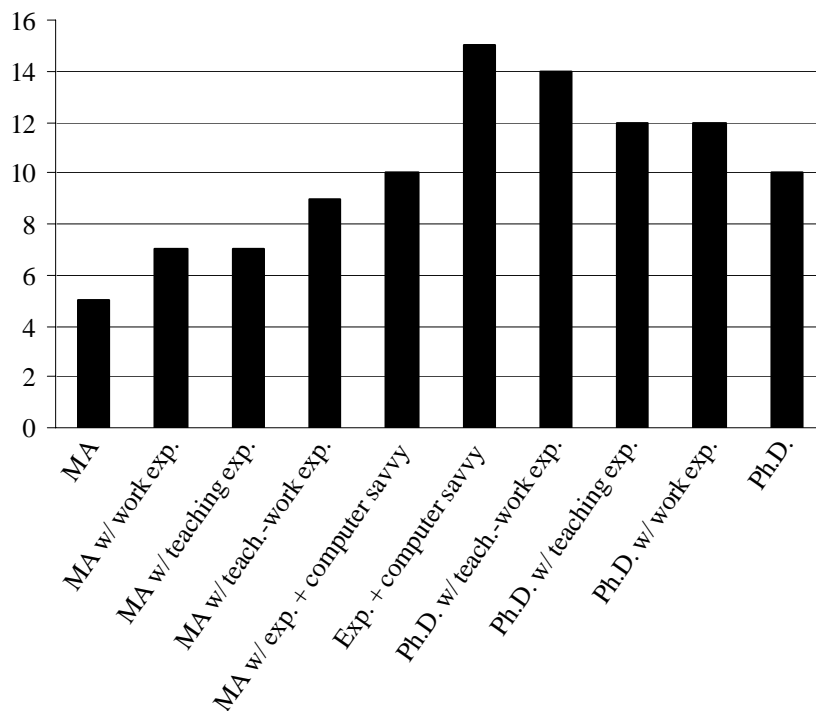
The number of students pursuing degrees in higher education is predicted to increase over the next decade (Allen and Seaman 2006). An increased demand for more qualified faculty for teaching students at all levels and in all disciplines has arisen to meet the demands of the increasing number of students and more specialized courses. A large sampling of institutions of higher education report that approximately 46 percent of their online and face-to-face courses are taught by non-core (adjunct) faculty (Dickeson 2006). With the increases in demand being higher at the associate-degree institutions versus baccalaureate colleges, the requirements for teaching faculty vary and may be addressed specifically at the qualifications of the instructor, specifically in the areas of highest degree earned, practical experience, teaching experience, and most recently, online teaching experience—computer savvy.

Regional accreditation provides a number of standards that must be met. The accreditation process ensures the review of a school's faculty, recruiting practices, admissions procedures, course content, and more (Littlefield 2006).

Influenced and affected by the role of accreditors, schools are accountable for continually working to improve the quality and results of the education they provide. Accreditation is important for federal financial aid, transfer of credit, and future employment (World Wide Learn 2004).

Regional accreditation requires that faculty members have, at a minimum, a master's degree in the area of teaching with a minimum of 18 hours of coursework. There are further requirements for a requisite percentage of core and major-area courses to be taught by full-time faculty and terminally-degreed faculty (Littlefield 2006). The daunting task for many institutions taking on increases in the number of students and subsequent courses offered is the ability to find the match of full-time and terminally-degreed faculty to meet the new and future demands. Unfortunately, there are a number of traditional, in-class instructors that either have no desire to move to the online

Figure 1. Weighted Emphasis on the Educational, Occupational, Teaching, and Online Experience of Online Faculty



environment, or simply do not possess the needed computer skill sets to teach in an online environment.

To meet the demand of more students and more specialized courses, there is an increased demand for more qualified faculty for teaching students at all levels and in all disciplines. The demand for online courses has far outpaced the full-time faculty capabilities at most institutions (Puzziferro-Schnitzer 2006). A large sampling of institutions of higher education report that approximately 40 percent of their online and face-to-face courses are taught by non-core (adjunct) faculty, and this is nearly 60 percent at community colleges (Maitland and Rhoades 2005). With the increases in demand being higher at the associate-degree institutions versus baccalaureate colleges, the requirements for teaching faculty varies and may be addressed at the qualifications of the instructor, specifically in the areas of highest degree earned, practical experience, teaching experience, and, most recently, online teaching experience (computer savvy). Figure 1 depicts the weighted emphasis on these four areas.

Recognizing the Key Steps to Teaching Online

The creation of an online program requires coordination among course development, course evaluation, and the faculty development process. The faculty development process consists of recruiting, training, mentoring, and evaluating new faculty, as well as providing for their professional development. Puzziferro-Schnitzer (2006) note that “virtual adjuncts, ‘cyber-faculty,’ are becoming a highly valued and precious resource for distance learning, and the stigma once endured, is diminishing” (2). Unlike in-class adjuncts, online adjunct faculty provide a new blend of instructor with specialization in the area of expertise as well as computer specialization that allows a match of needs of the institution with skill-set of the individual. This is not always possible in a number of institutions due to the adjunct pool available in the geographic area. Contracted to deliver subjects over a five-, eight-, twelve-, or 16-week period, adjunct faculty lead and facilitate all aspects of student learning, including mentoring and monitoring student progress, fostering communication and collaboration, guiding and evaluating student project work and other assignments, as well as responding to individual student requests/queries, and similar functions. Before they reach this stage, however, candidates first have to negotiate the initial recruiting and screening process.

The next most pressing issue for survey respondents involved the management of an adjunct pool. It is very important to provide annual

evaluations of online instructors. Evaluations must come from both internal and external evaluators following collaborated and established standards (O'Connor and Eskey 2006). Many universities have established distance learning programs without adequate course assessment functions, which are important to ensure that standards are met utilizing a number of quality areas. Recruitment, however, was of concern to many of our respondents.

Recruiting. To start off the adjunct faculty recruitment process, advertisements are usually placed in relevant channels—such as Web media, newspapers, and journals—inviting candidates to submit a comprehensive résumé. Interested potential adjunct faculty members are then screened by the Faculty Recruitment Committee, usually comprising the chief academic officer, the faculty affairs manager, the human resources manager, and the relevant full time faculty member. The candidates are then ranked within the various subject disciplines. Of course, good credentials on paper, and “brick-and-mortar” teaching accomplishments do not necessarily translate into a similar level of success online, and towards this end, the “Four-A model” developed by Rahman (2001) is useful (see Table 3).

Table 3. The Four-A Model of a Faculty Matrix

	Research Emphasis	Teaching Emphasis
Technology Oriented	Attract	Acquire
Technology Averse	Avoid	Attend

The Four-A Model helps identify potential faculty members. Professors who are technology averse and have a research emphasis are generally not suitable for online programs and, thus, are part of the “Avoid” group. It may be possible to lure those who are technology-oriented with a research emphasis (the “Attract” group), and those who are technology-averse with a teaching emphasis may be brought up to speed with appropriate training (the “Attend” group), but it is the teaching emphasis and technology-oriented faculty members who are more suitable for online delivery. These people are identified as the “Acquire” group. Faculty recruitment needs to become an integral part of the overall quality assurance process.

In a 2005 study, research revealed that the respondents’ complaints about adjunct faculty correlated quite closely with student complaints about adjuncts

(Eskey 2005). For example, many faculty respondents noted the lack of immediate feedback, including a persistent problem of adjunct instructors not responding to emails, messages, and so forth. This complaint emphasized that communication is still a major problem with distance education. Most of the problems cited were related to students who were physically located in a variety of time zones, making any synchronous attempts at communication less than satisfactory. Certainly some distance education students, by their “virtual withdrawal” from course participation, brought problems upon themselves, but many such problems were aggravated by online adjuncts who failed to take any extra steps to regain or maintain contact.

Faculty Evaluation and Development. The next most pressing issue addressed by survey respondents involved the management of an adjunct pool (Eskey 2005). It is very important to provide annual evaluations of online adjunct instructors. Evaluations must come from both internal and external evaluators following collaborated and established standards. Many universities have established distance learning programs without adequate course assessment functions, which are important to ensure that standards are met utilizing a number of quality areas.

The functions of an online instructor or facilitator include being a “teacher, organizer, grader, mentor, role model, counselor, coach, supervisor, problem solver, and liaison.” The dynamism of an online learning environment requires much proficiency from online instructors and is something that requires continuous monitoring. Student evaluation usually falls into three main types: those oriented toward the construction of knowledge; those oriented toward placing value; and those oriented toward how information is used. Instructor evaluation is usually broken into two distinct categories: formative and summative (Eaton 2000).

Formative evaluation focuses on processes and summative evaluation focuses on outcomes. Formative evaluation can serve a variety of purposes and is somewhat of a proxy for a needs assessment which gathers information on whether or not there is a substantive need for action. It can also help determine if the unit or program can be feasibly evaluated. However, formative evaluation needs more structured conceptualization instruments, perhaps linked to target audience needs and possible outcomes. Formative assessment can also look at program delivery to improve implementation and track systems changes. Unfortunately, much of the past focus on program evaluation has been on outcomes, but this has limitations. Evaluators focus on outcomes at the risk of excluding the process side.

Working with faculty to become better online instructors is important. Helping them to integrate technology into their instruction has been the single most important IT issue confronting campuses for many years. The trick to good faculty development is allowing academic freedom in the teaching of courses while nurturing best practices in the methods of instructional delivery. Development is an ongoing process and definitely a challenge which must be faced in the future. A number of schools, proprietary, private, and public have placed both resources and personnel into separate sections of course development, instructor training, instructor evaluation, mentoring, and professional development. For many institutions this has resulted in successful online programs with leadership, administration, faculty, and student buy-in.

Conclusion

Both state universities and private institutions are competing. State institutions and for profit (proprietary) institutions are competing. State institutions are competing for legislative dollars in order to operate. Private institutions are competing for the same students utilizing private funding. An issue becomes the choices, decisions, and alternatives between quality and education and enrollment and revenues. These “choices” are often survival choices confirmed at the president, chancellor, provost, and regent levels. The increase in enrollments is certainly a source of revenue that potentially lowers dependence on an institution’s dependence on the legislature for operating revenues. However, this is a key source of contention. It is difficult, at best, to balance faculty recruitment, certification, and training with student recruitment in an online environment, while convincing instructors that quality must evolve. There is a continued and growing need for classrooms and talented, qualified faculty members; and, these “classrooms” are shifting to the Internet to both conserve valuable resources and accommodate the changing needs of today’s college students. Several institutions are in varied stages of both growing distance learning programs and in the process of coordinating the support, faculty, technology, student interest and “institutional buy-in” to allow for a meaningful transition. As we enter the twenty-first century, we find that a major shift toward distance learning has already occurred and is predicted to continue to grow at a steady rate over the next ten years.

It is virtually guaranteed that needs for criminal justice education will continue. However, building a number of stovepipe online programs across

the nation may not be the solution. Many of us may remember the long process from Sociology to Criminology and the offshoot and creation of the criminal justice discipline. Criminal Justice possesses a systematic body of knowledge, a common core of entrance requirements, a system for advancement and dissemination of knowledge, a recognition that “on the job training” is insufficient, identification of minimum standards and certifications, and standards of conduct or ethics, professional societies. While there are a number of accredited and non-accredited associate-level, bachelor’s, and masters-level programs, the analysis has provided a number of areas for “getting it right” and getting it right while meeting the needs of both faculty and students.

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